

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 was objected to for containing informalities. Claim 1 has been appropriately amended to obviate the objection.

Claims 1 and 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0004980 A1 to Onitsuka (hereinafter “Onitsuka”) in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0032030 A1 to Nakahara et al. (hereinafter “Nakahara”). For the following reasons, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding claim 1, neither Onitsuka nor Nakahara teaches a board support table having a plurality of holding portions for individually holding a plurality of boards including at least a first board and a second board, as required. As the Examiner concludes, “Onitsuka is really devoted to the processing of a *single* board.” Since Onitsuka does not teach the processing of plural boards, Nakahara is relied upon for teaching this limitation.

Applicant respectfully submits that Nakahara does not teach processing a plurality of boards. Rather, Nakahara relates to the processing of plural blocks formed on a *single* board. Nakahara does not suggest applying its teachings to the processing of plural boards. Moreover, the improvement emphasized by Nakahara centers on the fact that the position of the *whole board* is recognized based on the recognition points, and relative positional data is used to derive the individual positions of each block. Position recognition time is thereby shortened by eliminating the need to separately recognize recognition points for each block. Obviously, this improvement would not work on plural boards, since the position of each board is not necessarily fixed relative to the others. Thus, Nakahara effectively teaches away from having a plurality of boards, as in the presently claimed invention. Therefore, even if the teachings of Onitsuka and Nakahara are combined, every limitation of the claim would not be taught or

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Reply to Office action of July 27, 2004

suggested. Thus, claim 1 and its dependent claims 3-5 are patentable over the prior art of record.

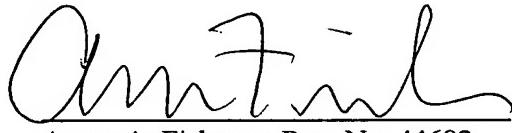
In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 36242.

Respectfully submitted,

PEARNE & GORDON LLP

By:



Aaron A. Fishman, Reg. No. 44682

1801 East 9th Street
Suite 1200
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-3108
(216) 579-1700

Date: October 25, 2004